

7-006 1966 STAR LANE Eviction
Report

THE BATTLE OF STAR LANE

We view with grave concern the action of officers from S.A. Police Station at the above caravan site on the morning of 1 1966. Their treatment of women and children was inhuman and contravened the European Convention on Human Rights which guarantees human treatment at all times.

We are laying a formal complaint, through the National Council for Civil Liberties, before the Chief Commissioner of Police and for the attention of the Home Secretary. We are asking for a sworn public inquiry into the conduct of the various police officers involved in this incident, particularly P650, P282, an officer known as 'Buster' and an officer with a beard. The following two statements made by two of our people on the site at the time will suffice for the purpose of this memorandum.

1) Statement of Louise Brown:-

On Friday morning, December 16th, we sat on the draw-bar to stop the council removing the caravan. We refused to move and the police moved in. I saw a policeman pulling Louise Devall's hair and she fell into the mud. I was holding my baby boy. I saw a policeman hit May Fenner who is expecting a baby and is paying rent on the site. She has bad nerves. The councilmen just stood back and watched after pushing the back of the trailer. The struggle went on for about an hour from 8.30 a.m. onwards. The policeman slapped and stuck May several times. (December 1966 statement.)

2) Statement made by Mary Cooper, December 20th 1966:-

On Friday, December 16th, between 8.30 and 9.00 a.m., I went over to Bill Smith's caravan and with Ruby Smith (Bill's wife), Liza Cooper (my mother), Louise Devall, Louise Brown and Mary Fenner, I sat down on the draw-bar with the intention of refusing to move, but did not intend to use any violence or abuse, but to resist just by sitting there. The council man asked us to move and we refused. The police then came forward and tried to pull the draw-bar and we tried to hang on to it. Then police officer P282 came forward and grabbed my cardigan to try to pull me away. He then caught hold of my hand and twisted my right arm and made me fall in the mud. I got up again and got back to the draw-bar. My wrist was sore for some time afterwards. I did not throw mud at the police.
